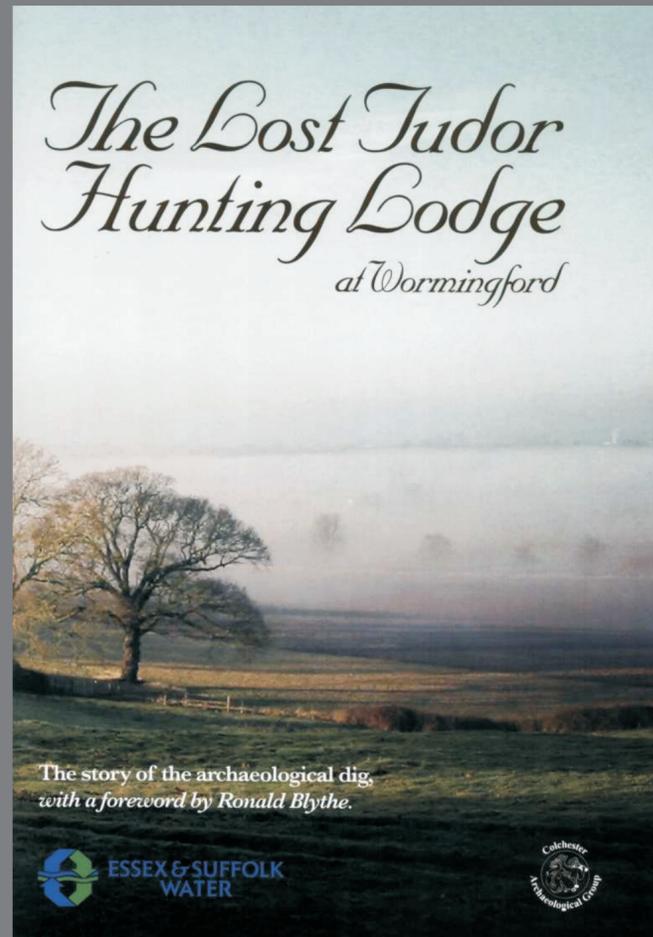


the Colchester archaeologist



Roman circus appeal

H G Wells in Colchester?

Protecting the best of Colchester's built heritage

Latest discoveries near the castle and the Temple of Claudius

ISSN 0952-0988



9 770952 098493

Colchester Archaeological Trust



the Colchester archaeologist



Published by
Colchester Archaeological Trust,
12 Lexden Road,
Colchester,
CO3 3NF.
ISSN 0952-0988

© Colchester Archaeological Trust 2010
Edited and layout by Philip Crummy
Printed by Alphaprint, Colchester

The Colchester Archaeologist magazine is supported by the Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust – see page 31.



**A different bank
for people who want
a different world**

CHARITY BANK

We are a bank that is also a charity, with a mission to create sustainable charities and social businesses.

Our work is funded by people who want to use some of their savings to support communities across the country.

To open a deposit account
Call us on 01732 774040
www.charitybank.org

Deposits are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). Registered Charity: 1031548. Authorized and regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust

If you are interested in following archaeological discoveries in Colchester, then why not consider joining the Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust? The subscription rates are modest, and include an annual copy of The Colchester Archaeologist magazine delivered to you as soon as it is published. You can also join tours of current sites and organised trips to places of historical and archaeological interest in the region.

The annual subscription rates:

Family membership	£6.00
Adults and institutions	£5.00
Children and students	£2.50

Corporate members of the Friends of the Colchester Archaeological

Trust:

Plater Claiborne,
Birkett Long,
Colchester Civic Society,
Faculty of Building (East Anglia),
Morley, Riches & Ablewhite,
R G Carter,
The Breakfast Club.

Places to visit on the web

www.catuk.org
website of the Colchester Archaeological Trust

www.friendsofcat.org.uk
website of the Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust

<http://cat.essex.ac.uk>
Colchester Archaeological Trust online library with over 500 downloadable Colchester site reports and publications in pdf form. Includes previous editions of The Colchester Archaeologist

www.romancircus.org
Roman circus appeal website

www.colchesterhistoricbuildingsforum.org.uk
Website about historic buildings in Colchester

The Colchester Archaeological Trust is on Facebook (but you will need to ask to join)

LoveRomanColchester is also on Facebook

www.camulos.com
Jess Jephcott's website about Colchester



contents



Roman circus on track by Philip Crummy **2**
latest news about the public appeal

Toto's pizzeria serves up a feast of archaeology by Don Shimmin **4**
more revealed about the defences of Colchester castle



Protecting the best by Philip Crummy **8**
moves to identify Colchester's most significant buildings

The secret of Colchester and H G Wells by Philip Crummy **12**
was Colchester a source of inspiration for H G Wells?



Focussing on Colchester's hidden history by Darius Laws **16**
photography competition

Primary school competitions **18**
results of the circus drawing and writing competitions



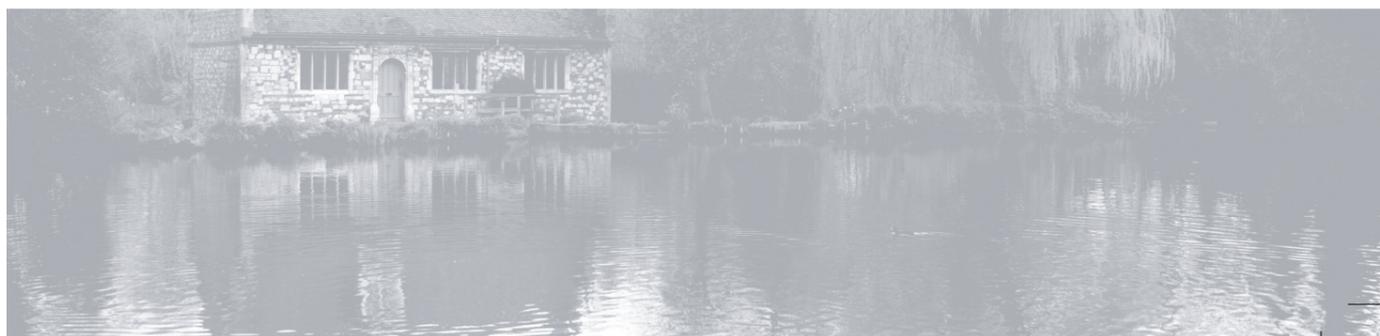
Queen Elizabeth slept here (well, almost...) by Howard Brooks **20**
the search for the lost Tudor Hunting Lodge at Wormingford

Spoil heap by Ben Holloway **24**
a roundup of archaeological investigations in 2009



Sandon before the park-and-ride **28**
by Howard Brooks and Ben Holloway
Anglo-Saxon buildings found near Chelmsford

Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust by Jane Meech **31**
last year's trips and events





Appeal launch

Roman circus on track



Donations reach almost £250,000



THANKS to the fantastic response from the public, Colchester's Roman circus is on track for a comeback! The appeal for funds raised almost £250,000 - a quarter needed to buy the former Sergeants' Mess and its garden with the remains of the circus starting gates. Many, many thanks to all of you who have donated or helped in some other way. Your donation is important regardless of size, not simply financially, but as an expression of your support for the project.

The membership of the Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust in particular were very generous and between them they raised a very substantial sum towards the cause. Very many thanks indeed! But the Friends were far from alone. Over a three-month period, £180,000 was collected from individuals, businesses, and organisations of various sorts. The Hervey Benham Trust helped the appeal on its way with a generous grant, and the Colchester Borough Council promised a donation of £30,000 if the appeal reached £170,000 which of course it did. The campaign was masterminded by our excellent appeal team with great support from the local media.

Just under a million pounds is needed to buy and renovate the Sergeants' Mess and its garden. The proceeds of the appeal will pay for about a quarter of the building.

Donations

Businesses

Aceville Publications
Berry Feed Ingredients
Body & Sole (Colchester)
Colchester Borough Council
Elizabeth Cannon Antiques
Indikart Racing Club
Lancer Property Holdings
Level Best Art Café (Dacon Trust)
Linklaters
Little Horkesley Parish Council
Pioneer Research Chemicals
Printwize
Staff at Oxford Archaeology East
WRS Insurance Brokers

Trusts

Colchester History Fayre Trust
Glossop Family Trust
Hervey Benham Trust
Leslie Mary Carter Charitable Trust
The Brocklebank Charitable Trust
The Phillips Trust
Thomas F Franke Trust
The Victor Batte Lay Trust

Schools and other places of education

Catton College
Colchester High School
University of Essex
Hamilton Primary School
Littlegarth School
Myland Primary School Archaeology Club
North Primary School
Oxford House School
The Sixth Form College Colchester

In memoriam

William Valentine Dixon
Eric Chalice and Rupert Shepherd
Derek Edward Hunt
Kathleen and Derek Tulley
Bruce Duncan Wyatt

Groups and societies

Association of Roman Archaeology
Billericay Architectural and Historical Society
Boxted History Group
Brain Valley Archaeological Society
Colchester 2020
Colchester and District Metal Detecting & Artefact Club
Colchester Archaeological Group
Colchester Building Preservation Trust
Colchester Conservatives
Colchester Civic Society
Colchester Liberal Democrats
Colchester Oyster Fayre Fund
Colchester Recalled
Colchester Tourist Guides Association
Essex Society for Archaeology and History
Friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust
Friends of the Colchester Museums and Art Galleries
Friends of the Jewry Wall Museum
Lexden History Group
North-East Essex Tractor and Engine Club
Roman and Castle Road Residents Association
Rotary Club of Colchester Trinity
The Aldermen of Colchester
Tiptree Scout Group
West Bergholt History Group
Witham and Countryside Society

Roll of honour (individuals)

*** Claudius ***

Mr Allen & Mrs Allen-Shepherd
Mr A French
Mr & Mrs M Wyatt

** Constantine **

Miss A Turner

* Hadrian *

Mrs V Anderton, Ms G Ashby,
Mr R Bacon, Mrs K Barrall,
Mrs C Bennett, Mr & Mrs M Berry,
Miss P Blandon, Mr J Calnan,
Alderman & Mrs D Cannon and family,
Mr & Mrs F Chadwick and family,
Ms H Chamberlain, Mr T Dennis,
Mr N Durlacher, Dr G Eames,
Jo Foster, Alderman J Fulford,
Mr S Gallup, Mr M Hassall,
Mr & Mrs P Herring and family,
Mrs S Hill, Dr & Mrs D Hills,
Mr J Jephcott, Mr F Johnson,
Mr & Mrs A Mogridge,
Dr & Mrs P Murray, Mrs C Raffae,
Mr & Mrs B Russell and family,
Mr M Shearing, Mr & Mrs M Stafford,
Mr M Steggle, Mr & Mrs A White,
Mr A Williams.

Roman citizens

Over 800 people. Names to be recorded permanently in a place of honour in the circus interpretation centre



Colchester United game collection



Elizabeth Cannon Antiques



Colchester 2020

Including the garden, this will form the interpretation centre. Another quarter of the building is to be bought by the Colchester Archaeological Trust with the aid of a mortgage from the Charity Bank and a grant from the Essex County Council. This will become the Trust's new home. The remaining part of the building is to be sold for private housing to raise sufficient funds to make the whole project viable. A second phase of fund-raising will be needed to fit out the interpretation centre and garden to a high standard.

The plan is that income from a tearoom in the centre will cover the running costs so that entry to the centre and garden will be free. The garden will be maintained by the Trust but will be given to the Colchester Borough Council to ensure that, as a key part of an important archaeological monument, it remains in public ownership indefinitely.

Unless we encounter any more serious problems (still unfortunately possible), we hope to take possession of the building during the autumn of this year (2010). If all goes well, renovations and building work will be carried out over the winter concurrently with the start of fund-raising for the second and final phase of the project.

Philip Crummy



Other help

Events

Don Quinn, Snake in the Grass
Colchester United and Weston Homes Stadium
Dan Cruickshank
Firstsite:Newsite
Caroline Lawrence and the Arts Centre
Colchester Library and *Portals to the Past*
Councillor Henry Spyvee, Mayor of Colchester
Patrik Minder of The Lemon Tree
Carter's Vineyards (Ben Bunting)
Waitrose
Odeon Cinema and manager Pepe



Caroline Lawrence

Professional services

Graeme Roe, Stanley Bragg Architects
Whybrow
C H Lindsey & Son
MacMillan & Wright
MLM
Ed Morton Partnership
Susan Patrik
Vaughan & Blyth
Bovis Homes
Patrick Denney
Stephen Lansley, Ellisons
Andrew Crayston, Fenn Wright
Ronnie Rosenthal, Birkett Long

Appeal team

Wendy Bailey (Chair of destination Colchester)
Amanda Findley
Bill Hayton
Jess Jephcott
Theresa Jephcott
Howard Lake
John Mallinson
Isobel Merry
Emma Spurgeon (CAT)
Francis Terry
Miranda Terry

Media support

Essex County Standard and Wendy Brading
Colchester Gazette (championed the appeal)
East Anglian Daily Times
Heart FM

Others

Colchester Borough Council
Councillor Lyn Barton
Tony Emmet
Dee Evans, Mercury Theatre
Peter Findley
Peter Herring
Shirley Herring
Councillor Jeremy Lucas
David Judge
Darius Laws
Councillor Nigel Offen
Rowena Macauley, Walk Colchester
Bob Russell
David Walton
Taylor Wimpey (owners of the Sergeants' Mess)

Patrons

Tony Benn
Ronald Blythe
Hugh Brogan
Nicky Campbell
Dan Cruickshank
Guy de la Bédoyère
Barbara Erskine
Tony Gardner
Adam Hart-Davis
Phill Jupitus
Caroline Lawrence
Richard Madeley
Esther Rantzen
Julian Richards
Tony Robinson
Peter Snow
Quinlan Terry
Wyatt Van Wendels
Sven Wombwell
Michael Wood



Dan Cruickshank

Toto's pizzeria serves up a feast of archaeology

The little strip of land between Museum Street and Cowdray Crescent where the War Memorial stands is an archaeological treasure trove. Here, buried beneath the shops and offices, lies precious remains of important monuments of Colchester's Roman and Norman past. These include a massive Roman foundation, over four metres wide, which carried a once impressive facade and a large monumental arch leading to the massive Temple of Claudius. These remains are exceptionally well preserved because they lie under the earthen bank of Colchester castle. But there is much more. Don Shimmin, who has been following recent building works in this important part of the historic town, explains how some puzzling fragments of foundation in Museum Street are likely to be part of a medieval barbican – a defensive structure which helped protect the castle's main entrance.

The area around Museum Street and Castle Bailey is of exceptional archaeological interest. The south precinct wall of the Temple of Claudius has been investigated several times over the years. Less well-known are the remains of the medieval gateway leading into the castle bailey. More evidence for this has come to light recently during the refurbishment of Toto's restaurant.

Monumental temple precinct wall

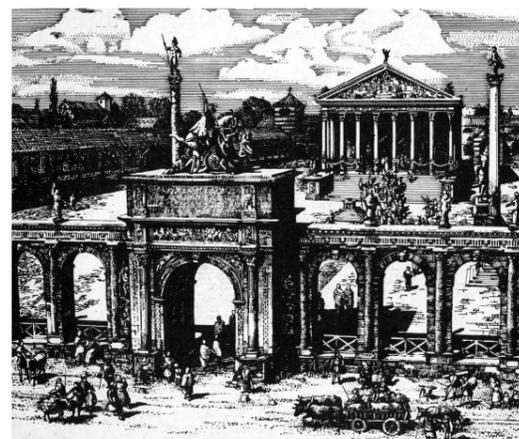
Evidence for the Roman south precinct wall was uncovered in 1931, 1953 and 1964. The wall was fifteen foot wide (4.6 m) and consisted of a large arcaded screen, which originally was probably over 8 m high. The temple precinct was entered through a monumental arch in the middle of the south wall, and to the south lay a series of east-west drains. Parts of the entrance and of one of the Roman drains were exposed a

few years ago in 2006 (see *The Colchester Archaeologist* 20, 16-7).

The site trenched in 1964 (97 High Street) is due for redevelopment in the near future. In advance of this, a number of trial holes were dug on the site by the contractors and were monitored by CAT. The remains of the south precinct wall were found in good condition just over a foot below the modern yard surface, to the rear of the High Street frontage. From the deposits overlying the precinct wall, and probably derived from it, came fragments of building materials including a piece of Purbeck marble and several unusual Roman bricks. Plans for the redevelopment of 97 High Street are being adjusted to avoid damage to the wall and to minimize the impact on the other archaeological remains on the site.

One of the reasons why the south precinct wall survived so well was because it was 'insulated' by

Part of the south gate uncovered under the pavement in Museum Street in 1986, looking south-west. It was crossed by modern services.



Artist's impression of the monument arch and ornamental arcade forming the southern boundary of the Temple of Claudius.



the Norman rampart which was piled-up on top of it. The bank was surmounted by a curtain wall, which was probably built in the 12th century and replaced an earlier timber palisade. Remains of this wall were destroyed by later activity, although it was mentioned by the early antiquarian Philip Morant. He wrote in 1748: 'The Bailey was formerly encompassed on the south and west sides by a strong wall in which were two gates. That on the south was the chief.'

Castle gate

One side of the south or Dunbarr gate was found under the pavement in the northern half of the Museum Street in 1986, during archaeological excavations in advance of the resurfacing of the street (see *The Colchester Archaeologist* 1, 5 & 21). It consisted of the base of a wall which survived at least 4 courses high and had several well-defined faces at right-angles to each other. The wall foundation lay only a foot or so below the modern ground level and extended under the adjacent building (Toto's).

The excavations in 1986 were limited in scale due to the short time available and restrictions over the depth it was possible to dig to. Access was only possible on a piecemeal basis, and the street was riddled with modern service trenches. Nevertheless a series of extensive foundations was uncovered along the length of Museum Street, often extending under the buildings fronting onto the street. The foundations were constructed of a yellowish sandy mortar and incorporated fragments of reused Roman brick/tile, septaria, and occasionally greensand, often with Roman mortar adhering to them.

Latest work

A complete refurbishment and enlargement of Toto's restaurant is taking place in 2009-10 and is being monitored by CAT. The work includes the underpinning of the structure, much of which is timber-framed and dates back to the 17th century. For this the contractors hand-dug a number of trenches, and they also lowered in places the level of the deposits under the modern floors. This gave CAT the opportunity to record more of the medieval foundations seen in 1986, including the previously unseen part of the south gate.

In the trenches in the northern part of Toto's a thick sandy deposit was reached roughly 1 m below the modern floor level. This was probably part of the medieval rampart around the castle bailey. A burial was disturbed nearby. This perhaps dated to the sixteenth or seventeenth century when the bailey was used for burials, mainly for prisoners housed in the keep. A small post-medieval brick cellar with a barrel-vaulted roof was also discovered.

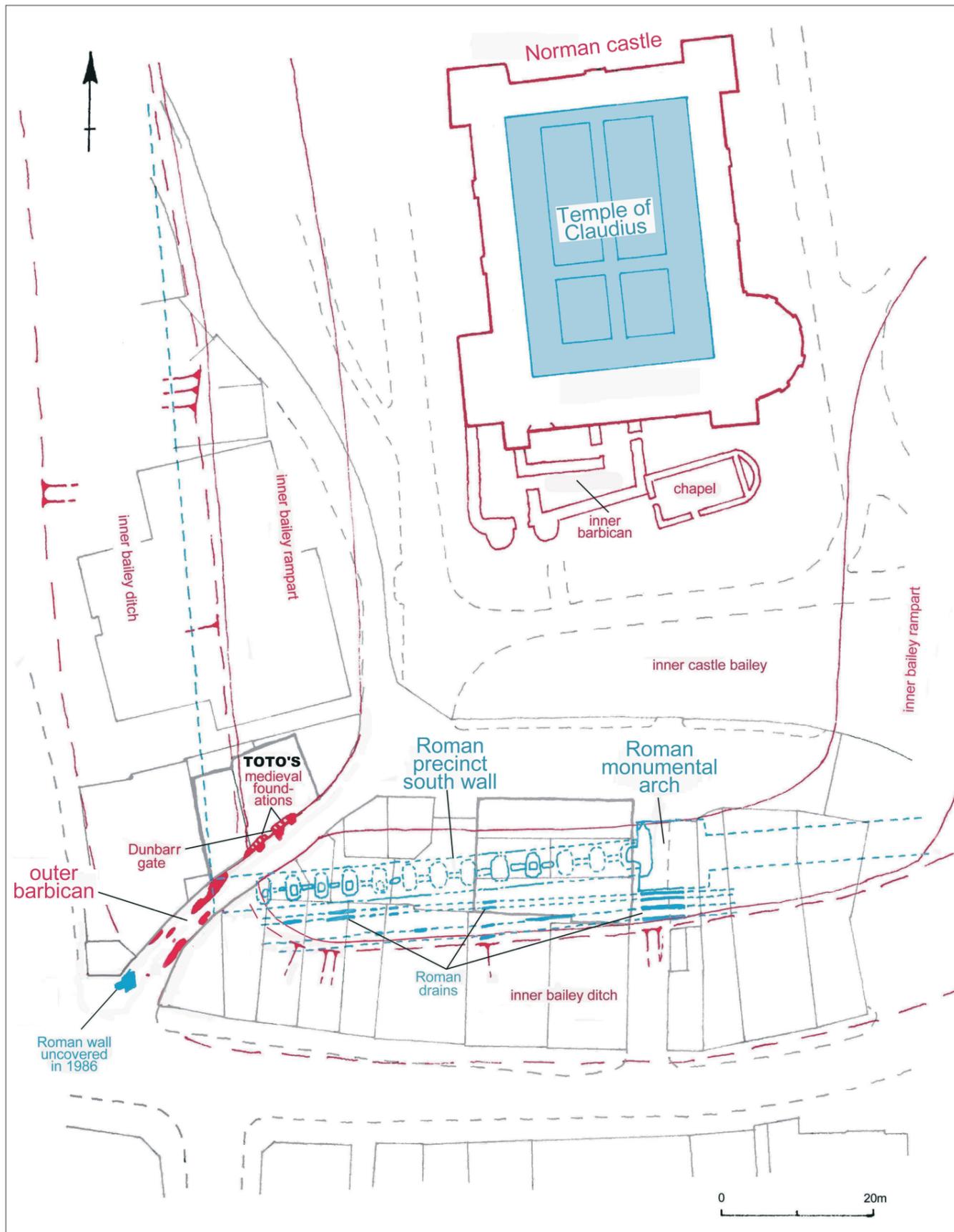
One of the trenches on the street frontage in Toto's was dug to a depth of 3.4 m, the lower 2 m or more of which appeared to consist of a medieval robber trench. This was probably left after the building materials had been robbed from a large Roman foundation, only 5 m to the north of the south precinct wall of the Temple of Claudius. Among the finds from the robber trench were three fragments of marble.

No trace was found of the other side of the medieval south gate in 1986 on the opposite side of the street. However this position accords well with that of the 'Castle Bayley gate' described in a document of 1683. Perhaps the remains of this side of the gate lay just to the east of Museum Street within the property described in the 1683 document. The gate was called the 'Dunbarr gate' on a map dated 1709. This name was probably not of great antiquity, but derived from the Dunbarr family who leased property in the area in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

Uncovering medieval foundations in the southern part of Museum Street in 1986; looking towards Toto's and the castle.

Part of the foundation for the south gate uncovered in a trench in Toto's, looking east. The 30 cm scale is resting on the lower part of the foundation, while the 1 m ranging rod is lying on the edge of Museum Street.





Plan showing the remains in blue of the Temple of Claudius and the great facade forming the southern side of the temple precinct and in red Colchester castle keep and its defences including the Dunbarr Gate and the outer barbican.

Newly-discovered castle barbican

Several more large foundations were uncovered in the southern half of Museum Street in 1986, but are less easy to interpret. They probably formed abutments for a bridge over the bailey ditch and/or a passageway leading up to the gate. Such a passageway is what appears to be shown in the map published by Speed in 1610. This whole group of foundations probably formed part of an outer barbican at the main entrance into the castle bailey. Barbicans were defensive outworks designed to protect an entrance to a castle or bailey, and were often reinforced with towers.

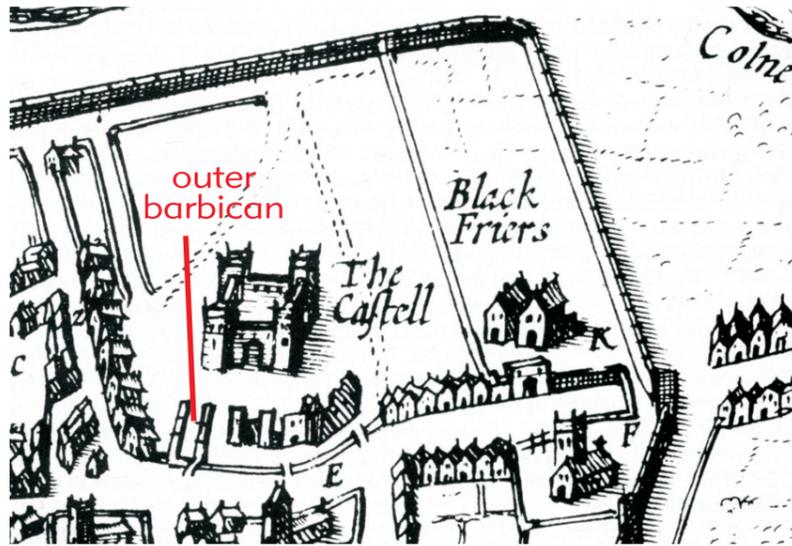
An inner barbican with two D-shaped towers was added in the thirteenth century to protect the main entrance to the castle keep itself. The remains of this were uncovered in 1931-3, along with other forebuildings including a chapel and a hall. The foundations of the inner barbican and chapel are still visible today on the south side of the castle keep.

Little archaeological dating evidence was recovered for the construction of the foundations in Museum Street, although documentary evidence suggests they date from the late 12th or early 13th century. The outer barbican had probably been largely demolished by the mid-17th century, although the 1683 document and the 1709 map suggest that the gate survived in some form until this time.

The 1986 excavations were funded by Colchester Borough Council. The watching brief at Toto's was funded by Mr F Mussi and that at 97 High Street by Flying Trade Group plc.



A bronze mount was found in 1937 by workmen who were digging in the castle bailey near the southern entrance to the castle keep. The openwork decoration with animal interlacing is in the Urnes style, which is dated c 1060-1130 and flourished mainly in Scandinavia. This piece however was probably made in England and illustrates the taste for Viking-style ornament during the early years of the castle. It is 40 mm wide.



Detail of the map of Colchester published in Speed in 1610, showing the passageway leading into the castle bailey.



Some of the clay-pipe fragments found at the northern end of Museum Street. These date mainly to the late 17th century and probably derive from clay-pipe kilns nearby.



Above. Three storey town house with slate roof and fronted with fashionable buff-coloured brick (now grey). Well preserved with original windows, door, and canopied doorcase. Built c 1851. Queen Street.

Above right. 'Arts and crafts' trellis porch of c 1900. Military Road. A similar one can be seen in London Road.

Protecting the best

Colchester, more than most modern towns in the country, continues to face substantial redevelopment pressure. The dilemma is ever there: how to preserve the best of the past without stifling the present and future? To help protect many of Colchester's oldest and most interesting buildings, a special 'local list' is being compiled. Philip Crummy, member of the Colchester Historic Buildings Forum, explains...



Colchester has lots of special buildings. The most outstanding of them – well over three hundred in number – have been given protection by central government by being 'listed'. However, as is recognised in more recent government guidelines, there are also buildings which do not appear in the official lists but are of local architectural or historical significance. These guidelines remind local authorities that they can compile their own 'local lists' of such buildings and draw up policies to give them some protection. Over the years, many local authorities across England and Wales have adopted lists of this kind or are in the course of doing so. The good news is that Colchester is to have its own version very soon.

Many of Colchester's buildings are of interest in their own right not just as significant survivals of the past but because they contribute to the street

scene and give Colchester its distinctive character. Apart from just houses and shops, there is a wealth of public and industrial buildings of various sorts mostly long since adapted for some new use or other. There are churches, schools, pubs, meeting rooms and other institutional buildings, warehouses, and factories. And on a smaller scale we must not forget the memorials, monuments, pillar boxes, telephone boxes and the rare patches of surviving granite setts on a few of our roads. Every building has a story to tell, every item has its own unique history, and everything combines to make the Colchester we know today.

The cocktail of buildings in the town centre in particular is a rich and varied one. Walk along any of the streets and what you see is the product of years of piecemeal change which can now be hard to disentangle. Over the centuries, buildings



An unusual and well preserved Art Deco shop front in Church Street designed by architects Baker and Burton in 1936 for barber H Snow who was the shop owner. The right-hand door was for the gents whereas the left-hand one was for the ladies (upstairs). The shop front has survived remarkably well considering it is wooden. Its fine condition is a credit to the owner of Smiths Bar Café who has looked after it so well for many years. The shop front is a later addition to the existing building which had probably been erected a few decades earlier.

were constantly being rebuilt or replaced and, time and time again, major fires scarred the town and left in their wake brand new developments in the latest styles. Substantial commercial buildings intended to make statements and impress stand side by side with modest timber-framed and brick houses altered again and again to adapt to changing needs, changing fashions, and a growing urban population. Constant change was the norm and still is.

Even the way the town changed itself was subject to change. Colchester's wealthiest citizens built themselves large houses at the expense of smaller ones particularly in the 18th century. But rapidly the town-centre became more densely populated. In the first half of the 19th century especially, large houses were divided into separate units to provide more homes and make money for their owners. Space was at a premium and new houses were squeezed into vacant plots. Then in the early Victorian period Colchester began seriously to spill out of its walled area when terraces of two-up, two-down houses were first built in numbers on land that had previously been open. These were the houses for the common man and the sorts of buildings that are rarely 'listed'. The establishment of the Colchester Garrison in the mid 1850s sped up the process whereby the built-up part of the town gradually crept outwards in a way it had not done so before. These 'extra-mural' developments of around 1840-60 occurred in Priory Street (especially the north side which was demolished many years ago), the Chapel Street/West Street area, Brook Street, and the north end of Albert Street. Once started, this process never stopped with new streets and buildings being laid further and further out from the town centre.

With a rapidly growing population in the 19th century, the town centre became more commercial. At first, shops were simply people's front rooms sometimes with a large window on to the street through which customers could purchase goods. With the insertion of shop fronts, the ground floors of private houses were effectively converted into shops. Later, new houses with integral shops on the ground floors became the norm in the main shopping areas.

The draft local list

A group of people with a special interest in the buildings of Colchester came together to form the Colchester Historic Buildings Forum and offered to compile a draft local list for Colchester on a voluntary basis. The Borough Council readily accepted the offer and the group then spent the following year doing the work. The focus of work-in-progress has been the website www.colchesterhistoricbuildingsforum.org.uk. Here team members co-operated behind the scenes to compile the list and members of the public can view the results as they are made public on the website.

Drawing up a list of this kind is a big job so we decided to limit our work to Colchester alone as opposed to the whole of its administrative district. This is because Colchester has a large concentration of interesting and significant buildings and it faces the greatest pressure from development and redevelopment in the area. Thus the draft local list covers the old Borough of Colchester – in other words, Colchester town centre and almost all of its suburbs.

Decisions, decisions...

Buildings which are 'listed' as opposed to being on the draft 'local list' include all buildings which have been judged to predate 1700 and are in a good or restorable condition as well as most buildings dated to between 1700-1840. Some buildings dated later than 1840 have also been listed but they had to be perfectly intact and of the highest architectural order..

Buildings on our "draft local list" on the other hand are those which have been judged by the group to be of local rather than national importance. We included buildings on the draft local list if they were not already listed and at least one of the following criteria apply:

- The building is earlier than 1840 and is in good or restorable condition.
- The building dates to between 1840-1945 and is largely complete plus is of an architectural and/or historic value which rises from 'good' for the oldest buildings to 'very high' for the younger ones in the date range.
- The building was built after 1945 and is complete with no inappropriate alterations or extensions plus is of highest architectural or historic value.
- The building has group or skyline value.

Trafalgar House.
Well-preserved brick house in Greenstead Road. Date c 1825-50.





Beaconsfield Avenue. Fine, well-preserved example of a late Victorian street with many surviving original features.

1877. Possibly the largest surviving set of Victorian domestic railings in Colchester. Made by Asten and Bennell c 1877.



Various additional factors were taken into account during the selection process. They are not sufficient in their own right or in combination to justify inclusion in the list but they could tip the balance in marginal cases. These are as follows: historic value, iconic value, contribution to the historic character of the area in which it stands, prominence in the townscape or landscape, quirkiness, rarity in Colchester terms, and sustainability (ie the building is realistically capable of reuse).

Compilation of the local list is not just about identifying valuable or significant buildings, but also about trying to preserve what makes Colchester different to everywhere else. For this reason, the contribution a building can make to



Pair of three-storey brick houses with slate roof and almost all of their original windows. Very characterful building. An unusual type in Colchester in terms of height and the fact that the ground floor still survives never having been converted into a shop. Probably 1825-50. North Station road.

the townscape as one of a group can be significant and explains why some buildings are included in the draft local list which might otherwise have been omitted.

The Victorian problem and its solution

Colchester's Victorian buildings pose a problem of selection as far as the local list is concerned because they survive in large numbers (as in so many other towns) and none of the earliest of these extra-mural developments have fared particularly well over the years. Plastic replacement windows of inappropriate design are common. Roofs have been changed, outside walls rendered and/or painted, most front doors have long since been replaced, and original boundary walls removed. The feature which has survived the best are the diminutive and visually-attractive porches which characterise these early workers' homes. These were the cheapest versions of the grander porches which adorned the more expensive houses where a deep and effective roof (a canopy) was supported by free-standing flanking columns all designed in a classical style. Preservation as far as possible of some of these early 'porched' Victorian two-up two-down buildings is an objective worth pursuing despite their condition because of their association with early Victorian Colchester and the start of its rapid growth into the town it is today.

On the other hand, mid and late Victorian houses for the masses (including the middle classes) are better preserved. Fine examples can be found inside the town wall in the Roman Road/Castle Road area as well as outside. To protect some buildings of this key era in Colchester's history, we are suggesting that a new conservation area be established which would cover a sequence of developments laid out street by street throughout the Victorian and Edwardian periods. The limits and extent of this proposed conservation area can be seen here. At the north end, closest to the walled part of the town, is the Chapel Street/West Street/South Street west area which was laid out around 1842 and was in effect Colchester's first extra-mural estate. Moving southwards (broadly) and getting progressively later in date are Alexandra Road (1870s) and Alexandra Terrace (between 1875 and 1895), Cedars Road (formerly Gilbert Road/South Street East (between 1886 and 1905). Beaconsfield Avenue (1890-1894+), Salisbury Avenue (1891-95), Wickham Road (1899-1902+), Errington Road (1901-5+), Hamilton Road (1902-3+), and Constantine Road (1905-6+).

All the buildings within the proposed new conservation area have been nominated for the local list and so too have the buildings within the New Town conservation area.

The finished draft list and its future

Excluding buildings in the proposed new conservation area and the New Town conservation area, the total number of buildings on the draft local list by January 2010 was over six hundred. At this point, these were made public on the website and everybody was invited through the local paper and the website to make comments on the list over the following two months. This prompted various emails offering suggestions for additions to the list or corrections or additional information for the website. A final review post-public consultation produced the final draft list which was given to the Council in July for their own consideration, review and eventual adoption. Each individual house-owner is to be notified if the Council decides to include their property on the list and given the opportunity to comment.

Local listing is a limited tool for preservation and is not nearly so effective as English Heritage listing. However, it does highlight an important subset of buildings which ought to be treated more sensitively than normal when it comes to major alterations especially of an external nature. The list also has the advantage of providing the planners and house owners with more information about some of the town's more significant buildings. This must be a good thing because the more informed the decision-maker, the more-informed the decision.

Future study and potential

The local list could only be compiled by looking at the outside of the buildings, just in fact as the list

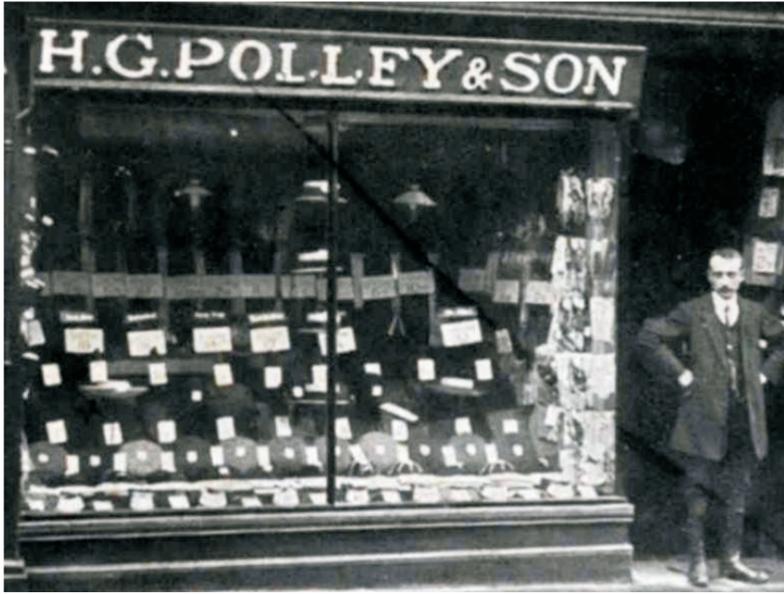


Row of basic 'two-up, two-down' style terraced Victorian houses but with pretensions. Mid 19th century. Priory Street.

of listed buildings was compiled many years ago. This means that the inside of lots of buildings remain unassessed and that there are many individual buildings whose origins and development remains uncertain or obscure. Many are likely to be older than they look - or at least contain older elements than their appearance might suggest. Some buildings clearly were subject to long and complicated series of changes. Hence lots of questions remain to be answered and lots of discoveries remain to be made not only about individual buildings but also about the town itself in terms of physical and population development and changing patterns of use. In a nutshell, the town centre is a rich source of largely untapped information about the development of Colchester from around the 15th century. It is like a large library where many of the books have hardly been opened, far less read.

Pair of semis built possibly 1902/3 with exuberant brick chimney stacks. The left-hand house is also unusual for the timber combined cart-shed and overhead workshop/store (left) which was added to it in 1909/10. Maldon Road.





The secret of Colchester and H G Wells



Did H G Wells name the main character in his famous novel *The History of Mr Polly* after a Colchester trader in St Botolph's Street? And did he poke fun at one of the town's most prominent citizens? Philip Crummy poses the questions and makes a case...

The History of Mr Polly is an account of a disillusioned and bored shopkeeper in the clothing business whose little shop was located in the busy High Street of a fictitious town called Fishbourne. Ever threatened with bankruptcy, Polly was fed up with his work, his life, his wife, his neighbours, and his prospects. But he came up with a great solution – set the shop on fire and commit suicide so that it will look like an accident. In this way, he thought, he would get out and the wife would get the insurance money. But in the event the plan went wrong. "Ouch!" The razor was not supposed to hurt like that and he ended up a hero after rescuing an elderly neighbour from the fire. Some months later he mysteriously vanished, assumed drowned, and subsequently found happiness with the landlady of a Thames-side pub. If you have watched *The fall and rise of Reginald Perrin*, you'll recognise the story-line.

hated the retail trade, Polly as a clothier and Wells as a draper's apprentice which was in much the same business. Both married their cousins. Both went off their cousins. Both loved to cycle. Both loved to read. Both hankered after better, more fulfilling lives.

The usual assumption is that the novel was based on the High Street in Sandgate, Kent. And certainly no significant connection has ever been made between Wells and Colchester, far less that it was the inspiration for any of his work. But there is some evidence that this was really the case.

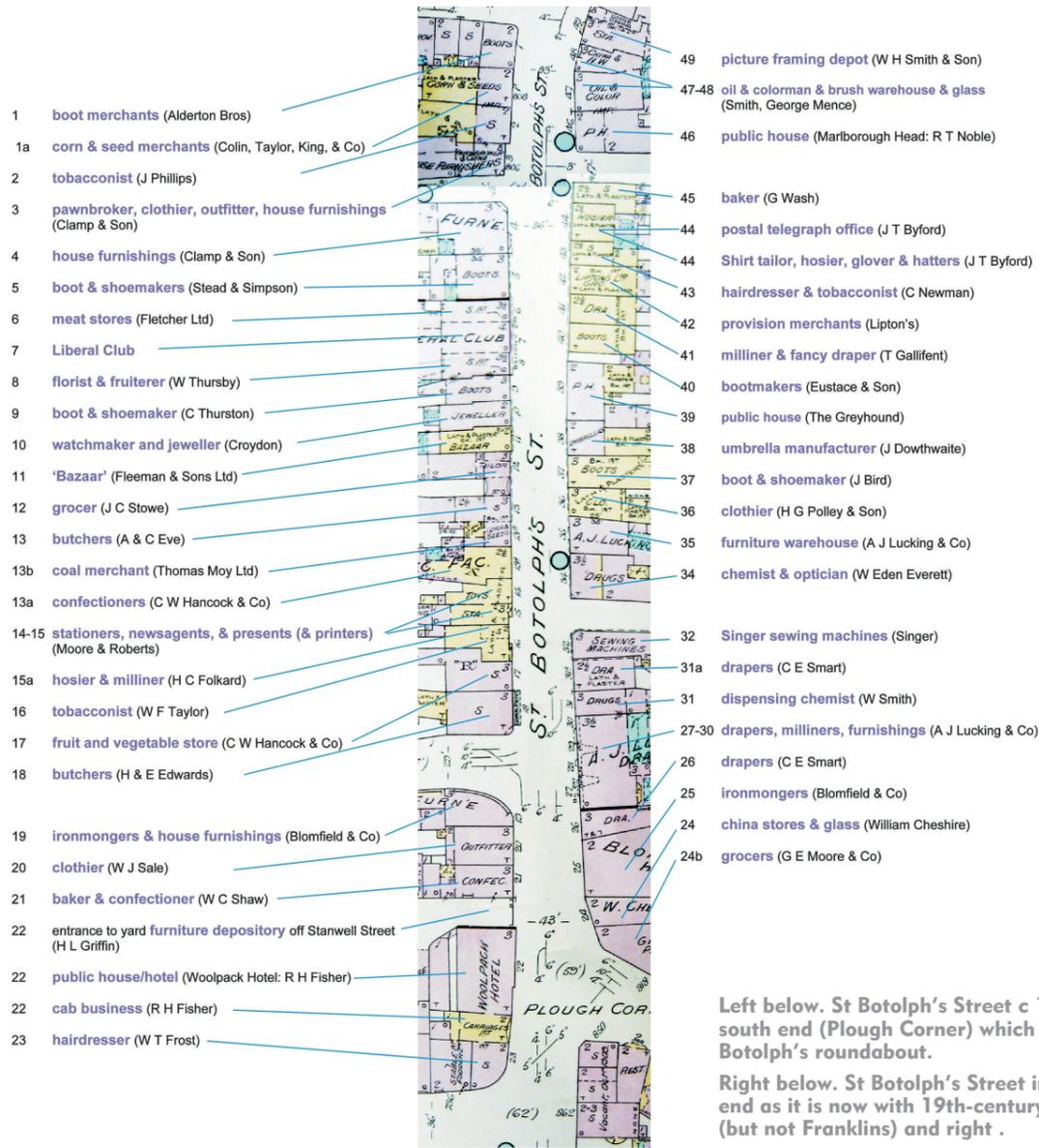
Contention 1: Fishbourne High Street was St Botolph's Street

St Botolph's Street was a busy little street filled with the full-range of small shops just like Fishbourne High Street described in *The History*. Although the famous Roman palace at Fishbourne was not discovered until the early 1960s, Fishbourne village was known in Wells' time for its Roman remains (a bath-house and various floors). Effectively then, Fishbourne was code for Colchester.

The named traders in Fishbourne High Street are Mr Polly (tailor), Mr Hinks (saddler), Rumbold (china shop), Chuffles (grocer), Tonks (another grocer), Boomer (wine merchant), Tashingford (chemist), Rusper (ironmonger), and Clamp (toy shop). Of these nine names, two were the names of real traders in St Botolph's Street in 1909, ie Mr H G Polley (tailor) and J H Clamp (outfitter, pawnbroker & upholsterer) and three others must have been invented by Wells because they don't appear in the 1911 census. In other words, of the

One of J H Clamp's shops in St Botolph's Street in the 1920s.



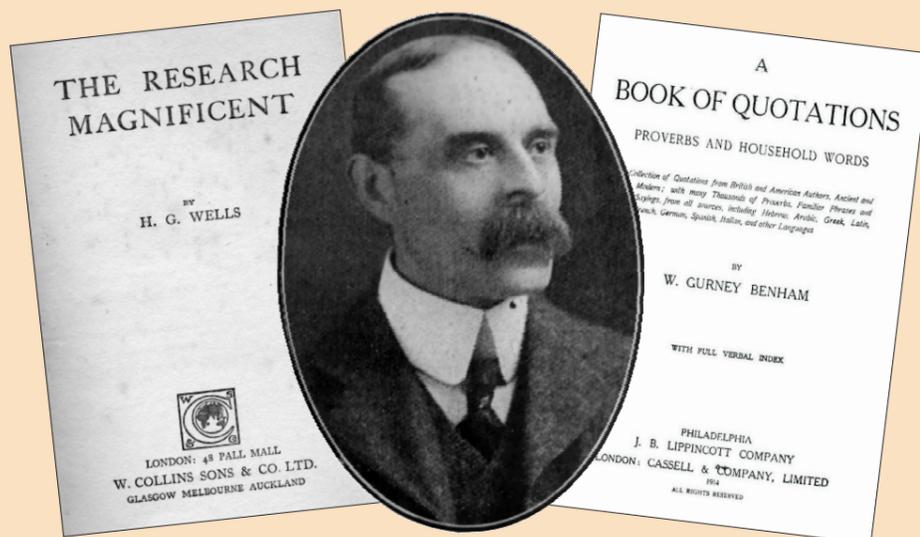


Left below. St Botolph's Street c 1910 viewed from the south end (Plough Corner) which is now the site of St Botolph's roundabout.

Right below. St Botolph's Street in 2009 from the south end as it is now with 19th-century buildings to the left (but not Franklins) and right .



The case of William Gurney Benham versus William Porphyry Benham and H G Wells' *The Research Magnificent*



Left: *The Research Magnificent* by H G Wells (1915). Centre: William Gurney Benham. Right: A book of quotations, proverbs and household words: a collection of quotations from British and American authors, ancient and modern; with many thousands of proverbs, familiar phrases and sayings, from all sources, including Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and other languages by William Gurney Benham (1907).

THE Research Magnificent is a comic novel about living up to one's ideals come what may. Wells' character, William Porphyry Benham, travels the world obsessively in pursuit of what he calls a noble or aristocratic life and gets into a lot of trouble as a result. The book tells how Porphyry documented the project and kept the results in his house in London. After Porphyry's unexpected death, a writer friend of his visited Porphyry's home to assess the value of his life's work – 'The Research Magnificent' and found nothing but an undigested mass of paperwork. 'There is no book in it', declared his friend. 'It was not a story, not an essay, not a confession, not a diary.... It was a vast proliferation. It wanted even a title.'

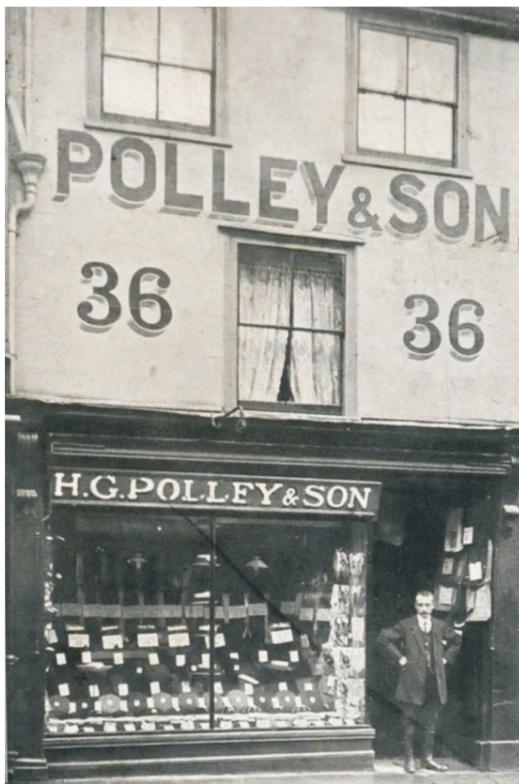
Interestingly, there are in *The Research Magnificent* some curious resonances with a successful book called *A book of quotations, proverbs and household words* by prominent Colcestrian William Gurney Benham. In fact, the apparent connections between the two works are so marked that they suggest that *The Research Magnificent* was a cruel satire of Gurney Benham's book.

William Gurney Benham was a scholar, a publisher and, for many years, editor of the Essex County Standard. He was also three times mayor of Colchester including in 1908/9 when *The History of Mr Polly* must have been in gestation. Like *The Research Magnificent*, his book was a mammoth piece of work. It was basically a huge compilation of 50,000 entries which could be sarcastically described by somebody so inclined as a 'Research Magnificent' with no story, point or even title. Moreover both works have an international aspect that's important to their stories. Porphyry Benham's idealistic drive took him physically round the world whereas Gurney Benham's passion took him there intellectually as his book's daunting subtitle reveals (see above).

As it happens, Benham was a Wells' family name – it was the maiden name of one of Wells' grandmothers – but nevertheless it is hard to avoid associating *The Research Magnificent* with Gurney Benham. The latter's great tome was first published in 1907 and then reprinted for the first time in 1914. A year later out came '*The Research Magnificent*' featuring a fictitious William Porphyry Benham whose name was uncannily close to the Colchester Benham. By replacing the name Gurney with Porphyry, Wells was not just playing with words, he was lacing his own work with a hidden reference to Gurney Benham and his book. Porphyry was the name of a famous ancient Phoenician philosopher, and proverbs, as Aristotle once famously said, were the earliest form of philosophy. Thus William 'Gurney' Benham became William 'Philosopher' Benham, author of a book of proverbs and would-be author of a magnificent piece of research.

Wells had been famous long before the publication of *The Research Magnificent* and it is difficult to believe that Gurney Benham would not have heard about the remarkable coincidence of names. Gurney Benham would hardly have failed to conclude, even if it was not intended, that Porphyry Benham was himself and that he and his book of quotations were being mocked by Wells.

Of course Wells was writing a work of fiction where anything goes. He could and would weave lots of different ideas together in complicated ways to create something new and different without necessarily having to be logical about it. Hence Wells could have been poking fun at Gurney Benham through his hero Porphyry but he may also have seen something of himself in this person since Wells, like Porphyry, was strongly principled in his approach to life and made waves as a result.



six real names in Fishbourne High Street, two of them were to be found in St Botolph's Street. The 1911 census also indicates that the surnames Polley and Clamp were rare so that the occurrence in both streets of not just one rare name but two is unlikely to be simply a matter of chance.

**Contention 2:
Wells knew about Colchester and had the opportunity to visit it many times**

Wells started to live in Essex at Easton Glebe near Dunmow around the time he wrote *The History of Mr Polly*. He lived in London for some years leading up to about 1914 but he had sometimes visited Easton Glebe before that. He is likely to have had first hand knowledge of Colchester at this time. Certainly Colchester figures in some of his other works, notably *War of the Worlds* and *Mr Brisher's Treasure*. The latter in particular reveals a more than superficial knowledge of Colchester because it is about the discovery of a buried hoard of silver coins. Plainly Wells associated Colchester with the Romans and buried treasure (although in this case the coins were modern forgeries). Wells also knew of at least one of Colchester's more important citizens because a principal character in one of his books was based on a Benham from Colchester (see opposite).

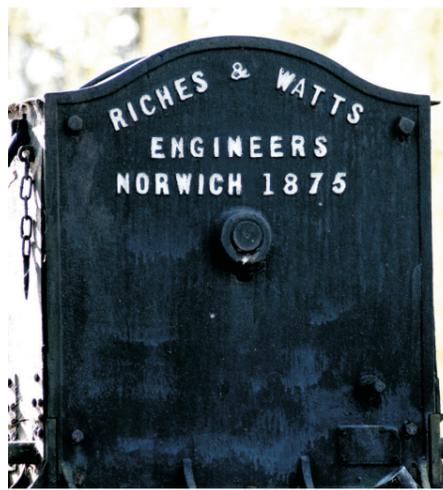
**Contention 3:
H G Wells used a famous murder case in St Botolph's Street as inspiration for his plot**

In 1893, the badly charred body of a tailor called Alfred Welch was found in the burnt remains of his shop at No 1 St Botolph's Street. A rope was

found around his head giving the impression that he had committed suicide and hung himself after setting fire to the premises (although this would be a strangely complicated way of killing yourself). However, it was subsequently concluded that Welch had received a blow to the head and that he had been murdered and left to look as if he had hung himself. Arthur Blatch, who worked for Welch as a porter, was suspected of the murder but he vanished immediately after the event. Almost seven years later, a man identified as Blatch but known as Lillywhite (!) was arrested in New Zealand. A Colchester policeman and a keeper from the Town Hall went out there and escorted the suspect back to Colchester to face trial. Eventually the man was acquitted despite being identified by the two men who brought him back to the UK.

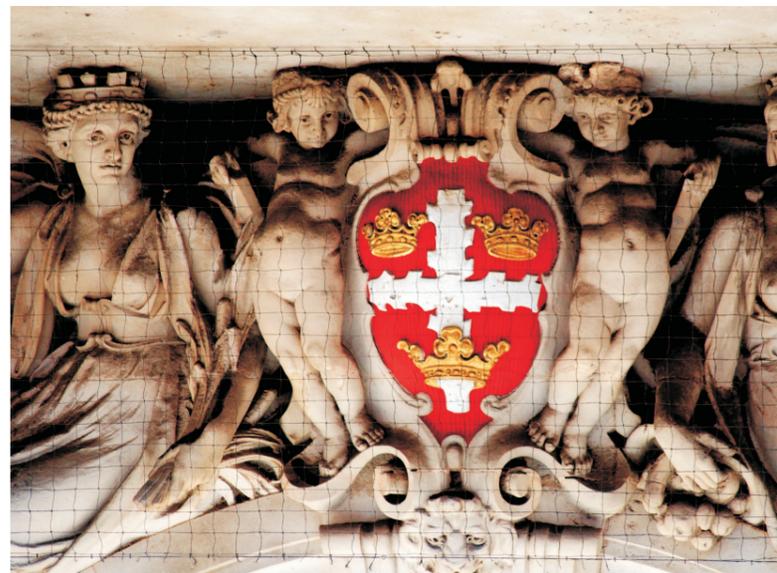
The case was a famous one which Wells could well have read about in the press. There are a number of features of the case which suggest that Wells knew about it and incorporated elements of it in his plot for *The History of Mr Polly*. These can be summarised as follows.

Alfred Welch died in his shop about 75 m away from Mr Polley's on the opposite side of the street. Alfred was a tailor just like the real Mr Polley. Mr Welch and H G Wells' Mr Polly were both called Alfred. His body was found in the ashes of his shop just as H G Wells' Mr Polly was to be. Welch was supposed to appear to have committed suicide just as his shop went up in flames. Mr Polley was to have died in his shop as it too went up in flames except his death was to be a suicide disguised as an accident. The owner of the rebuilt shop was Clamp.



WHEN you think of historic Colchester, typically it's the castle, Jumbo, the Roman walls and perhaps the circus which spring to mind. These are all fine examples of our heritage. However, there are many hidden gems throughout Colchester's streets many of which often go unnoticed. Statues, wood-carved faces, stone-cut animals, decorative detail surround us everywhere. Some fine examples of architectural detail can be found tucked away down back-streets or side lanes but quite often all one needs to do when walking through Colchester town-centre is to simply look up.

With such an eclectic mix of buildings and ancient sites, our photography competition is an ideal opportunity for budding photographers to snap a piece of Colchester's history. The brief is simple: 'Historic Colchester'. You could of course feature somewhere like Bourne Mill a Colchester classic which is often photographed and much admired. But can you capture other images which others have missed? Or can you take a well-known subject





Focussing on Colchester's hidden history

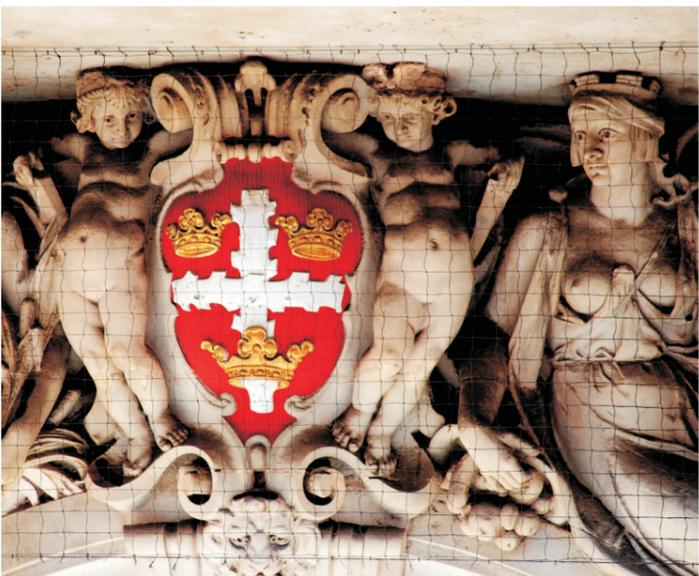


and show it in a striking or thought-provoking way? Our pictures here don't have people in them. Yours can be different. Include whomever or whatever makes for a better picture - one that is eye-catching or unusual or quirky. Anything goes providing there is a connection with Colchester's past.

The competition deadline is September 4th with the judges' favourite photos to be exhibited as part of the Heritage Weekend that month in SlackSpace's exhibition area in Queen Street. There will be two prize categories, 11-16 yr olds and 16 yrs and over. Top prizes will include the chance to become an archaeologist for the day and a signed copy *City of Victory* by Philip Crummy.

Photos are to be posted to 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, CO3 3NF or emailed to: competition@catuk.org.

Darius Laws



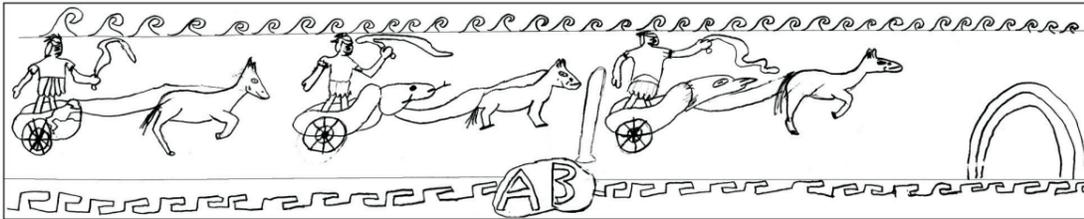
Primary school competition results



Design a chariot cup...

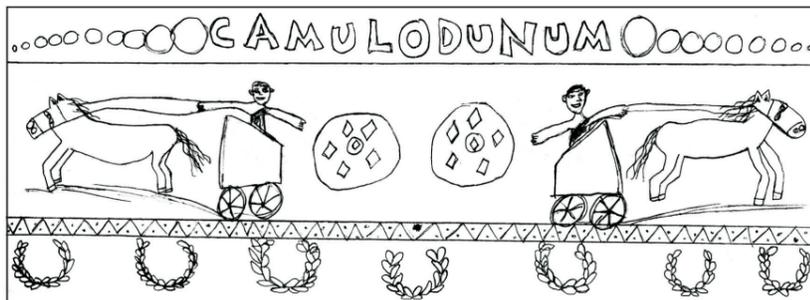
The challenge

Glass cups with moulded scenes of chariot races around the sides were called circus beakers. Archaeologists think they may have been sold as souvenirs of the most popular charioteers. Draw your own design for a souvenir beaker of the chariot races at the Colchester circus. Draw a rectangle and try to imagine what it would look like wrapped around a beaker. You might like to include some of the different features of a Roman circus in your design like the starting gates or turning posts.



FIRST PRIZE
Andrew B
Highwoods Primary

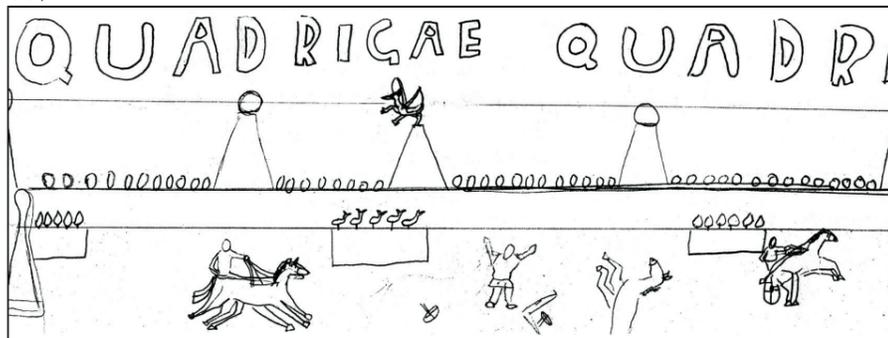
SECOND PRIZE
Daisy J
Highwoods Primary



THIRD PRIZE
Jasmine M
Highwoods Primary



RUNNER UP
Harry G
Colne Engaine Primary





Write a story...

The challenge

Write a mini saga in 50 words about a 'day out at the Circus'. Imagine you are living in Roman Colchester and writing an eyewitness account. The winning entry will capture what it would have been like to go to the circus in Roman times – the sights, sounds and smells. Think about your character. You could be a spectator, a charioteer, a vendor selling goods, a slave or even one of the horses!

FIRST PRIZE

A Day out at the Circus

Ceri A

Gosbecks Primary

The wind was rushing past my face as my snow white horses galloped at light speed. I could hear the chants of the crowd. I could smell fear in the air. I looked up, the finishing line was so close I could almost touch it. There it is! Yes! Winner!

SECOND PRIZE

A Day out at the Circus

Joseph K

St Teresa's Primary

I'm in Camulodunum. My bones shaking, waiting for the start of the race. I could smell the blood of the previously unlucky charioteers. The quadrigas were off. Already I was needed, I ran forwards, hoping not to get hit, as the crowd shouted, "NAUFRAGIUM". I picked up the unconscious slave.

THIRD PRIZE

A Day out at the Circus

Jessica A

Highwoods Primary

I Augustus of Gaul, great chariot racer took part in today's race. The emperor was giving a gold laurel wreath to the winner. My horses flew into the lead leaving my wrecked enemies in pieces. As I received my prize the crowd cheered me on as if I was a god.

RUNNER UP

A Day out at the Circus

James T

St Teresa's Primary

I waited for the race to start. I could feel the tension rising. My hooves were raring to go. The fans' cheers could be heard all across the track. The race started, my mane flew back. The sand spiralled away into the distance. I had won and was basking in glory.



Queen Elizabeth slept here (well, almost...)

Colchester Archaeological Group and the search for the lost Tudor Hunting Lodge at Wormingford

By Howard Brooks



CAT have always enjoyed a good working relationship with the Colchester Archaeological Group (CAG). CAG are technically the local amateur archaeologists, but the word 'amateur' is misplaced here – CAG are far more than local amateurs. Apart from hosting an excellent winter series of archaeological lectures on Monday evenings at Colchester Castle Museum, they have always been a practical, digging group. Excavations since their foundation in 1957 have included 'Red Hills', a Roman road, a Bronze Age cemetery, and an Iron Age enclosure. As well as the annual CAG Bulletin describing the year's work, they also have the publication of *Salt: the study of an ancient industry* (1975), and *The Red Hills of Essex* (1990) to their credit.

Since 2007, CAG have been excavating the site of a Tudor hunting lodge at Lodge Hills, Wormingford (10 km north-west of Colchester).

The site is on the southern edge of the Stour Valley, with a view of south Suffolk that can only be described as stunning. The location of the site has allowed CAG to apply for and win funding from the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project (under Simon Amstutz). This has allowed CAG to buy in professional help to add to the project team, mainly in the form of bringing in Howard Brooks from CAT to offer general advice, to write the pottery report and the overall excavation report. Later, this funding will also be used to bring in specialist reporting on the small finds and animal bone.

CAG have also been sponsored by Anglian Water (through Mr Jim Jenkins) to publish a popular booklet on the Wormingford dig. This booklet *The Lost Tudor Hunting Lodge at Wormingford: the story of the archaeological dig*, was published in May 2010. It was co-written by Howard Brooks (CAT), and Andrew White and Francis Nicholls (CAG), but research, survey and photography by other CAG members made a major contribution to the content and layout. The

Above. CAG excavating the site of the hunting lodge at Wormingford.

booklet gives the full story of the discovery and excavation of the Lodge site, with historical background on hunting lodges and Queen Elizabeth's visit in 1561. Historic buildings and sites of Tudor date have the habit of claiming that Queen Elizabeth slept here. Unfortunately we cannot claim this for the Woringford Lodge site, but the twenty-eight year old queen certainly visited the site on a hunting expedition in 1561 in the company of the twenty-two year old Sir William Waldegrave, who had just inherited and rebuilt the nearby Smallbridge Hall. (See page 23 for details of how to obtain the booklet).

How was the site discovered?

A brick foundation was discovered in 2006 by ferreters who were digging out a trapped ferret at the top of Lodge Hills, Woringford. CAG were asked to investigate, and uncovered a line of mortared soft red bricks. Local tradition had it that there was a Roman villa on Lodge Hills, but here was evidence of something much later. Pennies began to drop – it was known that Queen Elizabeth, a keen horsewoman and hunter had visited the nearby Smallbridge Hall in 1561, historic maps showed a deer park on this site (the deer park being the likely venue for her visit), and a brick wall had been found on the appropriately named 'Lodge Hills'. Was this the site of a Tudor hunting lodge? Excavations since 2007 have shown that, yes, this was almost certainly the case.

After the discovery of the first brick wall, a geophysical survey by magnetometry and resistivity was carried out to pinpoint the location and extent of any buildings which might lie hidden at Lodge Hills. The 'geophys' survey did locate 'anomalies' (ie, archaeological features), and these were used as the focus for a series of trenches which were subsequently laid out across the hilltop. In many cases, the trenches almost immediately exposed brick walls (or traces of walls which had been robbed out). This confirmed the presence of a number of brick buildings on Lodge Hills, and the size and shape of the bricks showed that the buildings were of 16th-19th century date (i.e., broadly Tudor and up to early 19th century).



The major discoveries at Lodge Hills have been: a cellar, the western edge of a brick structure (probably the main lodge building), a brick well, various sluices associated with a brick box (probably a garderobe or toilet, and a long brick foundation (probably of a wall enclosing the Lodge site). These structures together formed the group of buildings known as 'the Lodge'.

Trenching exposes a deep cut with large amounts of brick and tile debris. This later proved to be a cellar, probably the bottom storey of a hunting lodge tower.

The cellar

The photographs below (3, 4) show the excavation of the remains of a brick-built cellar. Originally, this had brick walls and a brick floor, but all the useful bricks have been stripped out of the structure and removed from the site (some local houses are built or repaired with similar-looking bricks, which may have come from this site). All of the unwanted or unused brick and tile debris had then been tipped back into the cellar void. There were some substantial pieces of brickwork here – probably fragments of supports for a staircase, or of pilasters around a doorway.



Far left. Large pieces of brickwork had been tipped back into the cellar void after its walls and floor were stripped out in the 1820s and the reusable bricks removed from the site.

Left. Traces of steps leading down to the cellar.

Although an unknown quantity of brickwork had been removed from the site, enough remained to allow us to estimate that this structure was brick-built up to at least first-storey level (possibly higher), and was probably a freestanding tower from which the hunt could be observed, or banquets could be held on special occasions. There are surviving examples of such towers at Seckford and Long Melford in Suffolk. Although the robbing-out of the brickwork had been thorough, there was evidence of a staircase leading down into the cellar from outside. This took the form of the outline of wooden steps and risers set into a mortar foundation.

which had rested on a wooden boarded-floor at the base of the well. This post was probably one of two (or three?) bored pipes held upright by crossbeams positioned in sockets in the sides of the well. The top of the pipe was tapered to receive the upper section(s), and a 'strainer' cover nailed on one side three feet from the lower end led to the inner bore through which water was pumped to the surface. The top pipe section would have a larger bore and a machined, cylindrical 'bucket' fitted inside. Underneath the gravel infill, the silt contained many objects of bone, wood, pottery and metal such as rivets and nails which had been thrown down into the well.



Above left. Brickwork foundations of the western side of the Lodge buildings.

Above right. Well under excavation (foreground), with sluice leading to garderobe (beyond fence).



The Lodge buildings

The Lodge site went through a number of distinct phases – from Tudor hunting lodge, to gentleman's residence, to farm. The walls (above left) were not as comprehensively robbed out as elsewhere on the site. The outer edge (near the right-hand red and white 2-metre pole) has been worn, presumably by the passage of many feet. For this reason, it may have been one of the doorways into the building, or perhaps the door leading to a stairwell. Slight misalignments between foundations such as these are evidence for the addition of walls to existing structures, principally in the 18th century.

The well

One of the most interesting structural discoveries was a 9-metre (30 foot) deep brick well. It was about 5ft in diameter, and was made of special, hand-made chamfered bricks laid without mortar (17 bricks make up the complete circumference). The well had been backfilled with gravel when it was no longer needed. This gravel was excavated, and the water table was reached at about 5.1 metres. Just below water level, a 9 inch square, 12ft-long bored-out elm pipe was found embedded almost vertically in the silt beneath. This was the bottom section of a timber pump



Far right. Examining the pump mechanism from the well.

The method of constructing these wells is as follows. They were constructed on top of a strong wooden ring-beam, usually of elm. Bricks were then laid on top of this beam and the soil excavated within and underneath it. The whole construction, known as a steening, then gradually sank down under the weight of the overlying brickwork. This well is built of mid- to late-sixteenth century bricks, and this early example of a pumping mechanism is integral to it. (This text on the well is based on work by Philip Cunningham of CAG and Neil Catchpole (Dedham Vale Countryside Officer), to whom we are grateful.)

The garderobe and sluices



In the north western corner of the site we found a heavily-built brick box associated with sluices. What were they used for? Our best guess is that it is part of a garderobe (or toilet) for the use of visitors to the hunting lodge. Water was extracted from the well (see above), then tipped into a sluice which led it into the large brick box. The shape of one of the brick walls indicates that there was a timber gate which could presumably be lifted to allow the water to rush out and flush the contents of the garderobe downhill and away from the site.

There are actually two phases of sluice. Brick sizes indicate that the earlier sluice was of Tudor date, and associated with the garderobe, and the Tudor Hunting lodge, and the later sluice (re-using bricks from the earlier structure) belonged to the later period of the site when it became Lodge Farm. One interesting aspect of the different phases of the sluice is that the early (Tudor) phase is built of mortared brick (intended to move water away), while the later phase (18th-century?) is dry-built, which would allow water to seep away in all directions.

The curtain wall

These are the part of the brick foundations along the northern edge of the site. The lack of mortar



Left. The long brick foundation on the north edge of the site.

Far left. Cleaning the brickwork on the outer edge of the garderobe.

on their top surfaces indicates that they may have held timber wall-plates. The foundations may have belonged to a wall enclosing the site, or to a 'Standing' – a structure erected as a viewing platform from where guests could view the hunt in the surrounding park.

The dig at Lodge Hills will continue throughout 2010, and if future discoveries are as interesting as those described here, CAG is in for an enjoyable year's digging!

*The Lost Tudor
Hunting Lodge*
at Wormingford

The story of the archaeological dig
with a foreword by Ronald Blythe.

ESSEX & SUFFOLK
WATER

Want to know more?

The investigation is described in a booklet which can be purchased for £5 from local bookshops. It can also be ordered from John Mallinson, CAG Hon Treasurer, 1 The Mount, Colchester CO3 4JR but postage is extra. Please contact John for the charges – JMallin704@aol.com.



Spoil heap

The annual roundup of the year's work by Ben Holloway

Here we all are again: the 2010 Colchester Archaeologist and the first Spoil Heap of the new decade! We have been busy this past year, despite the credit crunch, and a rather sticky patch last spring. Teams from CAT have been working on projects in all corners of the county, braving the elements and temperamental transport (among other things) in pursuit of archaeological glory across Essex, as well as in more familiar surroundings in and around Colchester.

Work further afield has included trips deep into the Essex countryside. The first two projects listed here were carried out for different clients, yet were within yards of each other in the centre of Great Dunmow.

Great Dunmow: No 2 Chequers Lane

The first of our Dunmow sites was located in the centre of the market town behind the former Police Station, and just 30m to the NW of a the site of a major 1970s excavation carried out by the Chelmsford Archaeological Trust (sometime defunct). An evaluation revealed post-medieval and modern pits, a medieval wall foundation, and a compacted gravel surface which is the northerly continuation of a Roman gravel road identified on the 1970s' site. In all, this was a little disappointing given the proximity of the site to the previous excavations

Great Dunmow: The Salerooms, Chequers Lane

Our second outing to Dunmow was literally around the corner from the No 2 Chequers Lane evaluation site and immediately east of the 1970s' excavation site. An evaluation followed by excavation on the footprint of a proposed new building revealed a thick deposit of gravel with a ditch on its southern side. Given its position and alignment, this must be the continuation of an east-west Roman road whose course was indicated by road-side ditch alignments on the 1970s excavation. Twenty-three Roman inhumation burials were clustered on the north edge of the site (the Chequers Lane frontage). No human bone survived (the local soil being too acidic), but a number of the graves contained hobnails and such grave goods as pots. In contrast to the 1970s site, there were no cremation burials. A number of small features may have been post-holes containing grave markers. A semi-circular feature cut some of the

graves. It is uncertain whether this was a ring-ditch around a grave, or (given the presence of a shrine on the adjacent 1970s site) of ritual origin.

All this proved to be a far more satisfying result to our second Dunmow excursion and one which continues to expand our knowledge of this small Romano-British market town.

Wendens Ambo

This year we seem to have spent a great deal of our time in the north-west corner of the county, and this project involved a trip close to the Cambridgeshire border. Two phases of excavation work uncovered Roman and medieval occupation, although finds indicate that there has been sporadic activity on this site from the prehistoric period to the present.

Pits and shallow ditches were evidence of 3rd-4th century AD agricultural activity, and a compacted flint surface was probably the focus for crop-processing near a local water source. The site was probably peripheral to the major Roman villa at Chinnel Barn (to the NW of this site, and excavated before the construction of the M11).

Below. Great Dunmow.
Far right. Wendens Ambo.



Three periods of post-Roman activity were identified. In the 12th century or earlier, a small agricultural building stood here. In the 13th-14th century, a large track-way constructed of flint nodules crossed the site and probably connected with the medieval hollow way to the south (which is now Duck Street). Perhaps the most interesting find was a type of previously-unrecognised medieval pottery now named 'Wendens Ambo ware' by Helen Walker of Essex County Field Archaeology Unit.

Evidence for 16th/17th century activity was sparse, and consisted mostly of midden deposits and features associated with the trackway.

Wickham Bishops

Another outing into the Essex countryside. This site was an equestrian centre (horses have been a constant theme over the last couple of years) which was being transformed into a fishing lake and wetland habitat. Records of previous discoveries on Wickham Bishops Hill include Late Iron Age burials found in 1916 'during the digging of WWI training trenches', and a Late Iron Age settlement. However, descriptions and co-ordinates for these previous investigations are at best vague and at worst contradictory! As a result there was some doubt over their precise location.

Two evaluation trenches were excavated within the area of a proposed lake. This exposed modern pits and post-holes (probably associated with the paddocks of the recent equestrian centre), a WWI military training trench, and two Roman urned cremation burials. The site was thought to have been Iron Age in date, but the discovery of the Roman burials adds to the period of activity here.

Ingatestone

This evaluation project was in the centre of Ingatestone, to the rear of the Star Public House (which was unfortunately closed for renovation). An evaluation trench revealed post-medieval and modern features, all of domestic origin and possibly the foundation of a brew-house associated with the listed pub fronting onto the High Street. There was no evidence of Roman roadside activity or of the medieval development of Ingatestone.

Little Clacton

This trip to the seaside (well, almost) included a tree-top flyover by the RAF Red Arrows!

The watching brief and limited excavation took place on the laying of a new cable from Sackett's Grove Caravan Park (Clacton-on-Sea) to Cook's Green (Little Clacton), which makes this the year's longest site (11km).

For the majority of this route, the cable was laid along existing roads or in existing ducts. Where the cable crossed open fields (for 1.7km of the route), the stripping of the easement was monitored and archaeological features excavated and recorded. Evidence for prehistoric



Little Clacton.

occupation consisted of an Iron Age ditch and a residual Iron Age loomweight fragment. Perhaps the most significant archaeological feature was the site of a small, medieval rectangular structure with a burnt patch, which was either a hearth or the base of an oven. It was not clear if the structure had been domestic or agricultural in function and if it had been permanently or occasionally occupied. An adjacent, right-angled gully appeared to be a part of a second, similar medieval structure. Perhaps this was a small farmstead or seasonal settlement.

Westerfield, Ipswich

This project was our largest of the year, and also the largest project we have undertaken outside Essex. In advance of a housing development, we dug 396 trial-trenches (total length 12km) on a 43-hectare site north of Ipswich (to the south and west of Westerfield Railway station). Post-excavation work is current, but we have evidence of multi-period occupation (Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, medieval, post-medieval and modern) across the whole of the site, with pockets of more concentrated activity in its northern and western parts.

The majority of the excavated features are the usual pits, ditches, and gullies. These are most likely to be agricultural in origin. Some clusters of post-holes might be structural (ie parts of buildings) or, as they were found in conjunction with field ditches, they may be parts of fences for stock management. There were also a number of World War II pill-boxes along the railway embankment on the northern side of the evaluation site, an anti-tank ditch on the southern side, and the base of a possible 'gun pit' associated with the anti-tank fortifications.

Colchester Garrison

As well as visits to all corners of the County we have (as ever) been working on interesting sites closer to home, in and around Colchester.

The Garrison project has been a barometer of recent archaeological work in Colchester (and farther afield) – we have been extremely busy over the last 10 years, but very little has happened



Goojerat Barracks

in the last 18 months after the completion of the Merville Barracks and because of the current economic downturn. However, we seem destined never to have a garrison-free year, and this year we returned to Goojerat Barracks to finish off an evaluation we started in 2007/08 but were unable to complete (for various logistical and security reasons).

The principal remains revealed by the twelve evaluation trenches were the widespread remains of barracks (constructed in 1900-1902, and rebuilt in the early 1970s). Significant archaeological features were very thinly distributed. Three undated features may have been Roman in date, mainly because one of them (a ditch) shared the orientation of a Roman field system found elsewhere at the Garrison. The only three sherds of pottery from this evaluation (two late Roman and one medieval) were residual in later contexts. Other features included natural linears (probably of glacial origin), and tree-throw pits (some natural, and some possibly due to the deliberate removal of tree stumps in connection with agricultural clearance).

Further evaluations and excavations are expected to start in summer 2010 in the Roman Barracks (Berechurch Hall Road) and at the Goojerat Barracks (again). Later, there should be more work at the Hyderabad Barracks, so we are likely to be in and around the garrison for sometime to come yet.

The History of Britain's oldest recorded town at your fingertips.

Featuring hundreds of colour pictures and illustrations detailing the town's impressive past and present, these four beautiful full colour guides are an essential addition to your book collection.

Specifically designed to be user-friendly and very reasonably priced, these guides also make superb gifts for friends and relatives.
All are available from the Colchester Visitor Information Centre, 1 Queen Street, Colchester. Tel: 01206 282920.

Other work in and around Colchester over the last year has included:

No 9 Walters Yard

A town-centre evaluation is quite a rarity these days, but plans for a new dwelling on a small patch of ground in Walter's yard required just such an investigation. This site is on the eastern side of Insula 11 of the Roman town. Trial-trenching established that the highest significant archaeological horizons were Roman in date, and were at depths ranging from 1.0m to 1.4m below present ground-level.

A robber trench marked the position of the wall of a Roman building (robbed out in the medieval period) which stood in the north-eastern quarter of the insula, and an adjacent fragment of compacted clay represented the floor of a Roman building probably pre-dating the robbed wall. As would be expected in the Roman town, the post-medieval soils overlying the Roman remains contained Roman brick and tile derived from the robbing of Roman buildings in the vicinity.

Historic maps indicate that this was an area of gardens in the post-medieval period. That fact, combined with the gradual infilling of previous garden areas with new buildings during the 18th-20th centuries would explain the depths of modern and post-medieval soils identified on the site.

East Hill House

Another evaluation within the walls of the Roman town (two in the same round-up!) This site lies in Insula 31/32 of the Roman town – an area that we have recently become familiar with in investigating and monitoring works associated with the construction of the Visual Arts Facility



East Hill House.

(VAF) which is to be the new home of firstsite: newsite.

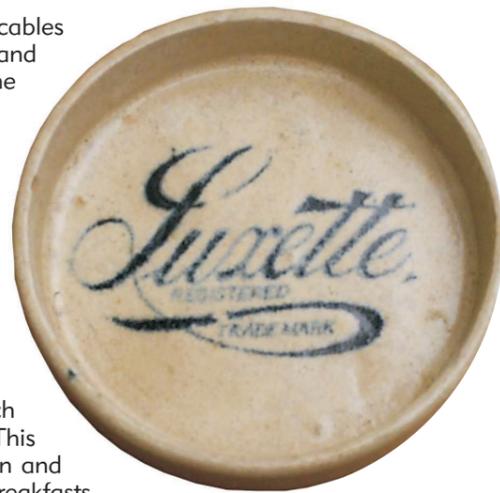
This project was undertaken prior to the redevelopment of East Hill House as a hotel and the construction of retail and residential units to the west.

Trenches excavated in the grounds and within East Hill House itself revealed parts of two well-appointed Roman buildings, presumably town-houses, one of which had a hypocaust, and the other at least one area of tessellated pavement.

Friday Wood

The old, unsightly pylons in Friday Wood are being replaced by power cables laid underground, usually in trenches. Under the Berechurch Dyke and Roman River a technique known as directional drilling was used. Due to the proximity of the dyke and of other sporadic late Iron Age and Roman finds, CAT were commissioned by EDF Energy Ltd and Carillion plc to monitor the laying of the cable ducts. Apart from a couple of worked flints and a fragment of Roman brick/tile, no significant ancient remains were located.

However, a collection of late Victorian/Edwardian pottery and glass was recovered from a large pit close to Park Farm. Along with items such as medicine bottles, a milk bottle, an ink pot, a mustard jar, ceramic blacking bottles and a chamber pot was a small ceramic dish (95 mm across) with the name 'Luxette' printed on it. A quick search on Ebay revealed similar examples, described as soap dishes, for sale for a few pounds each. Fortunately we did some more thorough research, which showed that the dish actually held a food preparation based on aspic. This was produced by Marshall's School of Cookery, London in late Victorian and Edwardian times. It was described thus: 'Luxette. The dainty purée. For Breakfasts, Luncheons, Picnics, Sandwiches, Hors d'oeuvres, Savouries etc'. (Don Shimmin)





Smaller of the two Anglo-Saxon buildings.

Howard Brooks and Ben Holloway summarise the results of a productive investigation at one of Chelmsford's carparks

SANDON lies in the Chelmer Valley, an area of great archaeological importance, east of the Roman and modern town of Chelmsford. The excavation site is at the highest point of a slight slope to the south of the River Chelmer. The local landscape contains sites of many periods, particularly those of prehistoric date.

The summer of 2009 was the second large-area excavation mounted by CAT at the Chelmsford Park and Ride site in Sandon. The site was first extended in the summer of 2006 (see *The Colchester Archaeologist* 20), but such has been the success of the Park and Ride facility that in 2009 it was decided to expand it to the west and double its size.

Possible Late Bronze Age 'placed deposit'.



Sandon before the park-and-ride

Previous excavation carried out by CAT in the summer of 2006 showed that the site was occupied from the Neolithic to the Roman periods, but the most significant discoveries dated to the Late Bronze Age and consisted of field ditches and a cemetery containing 35 cremation burials.

Further prehistoric discoveries were anticipated as the new season's work began with the stripping of the topsoil in July 2009. We were not disappointed.

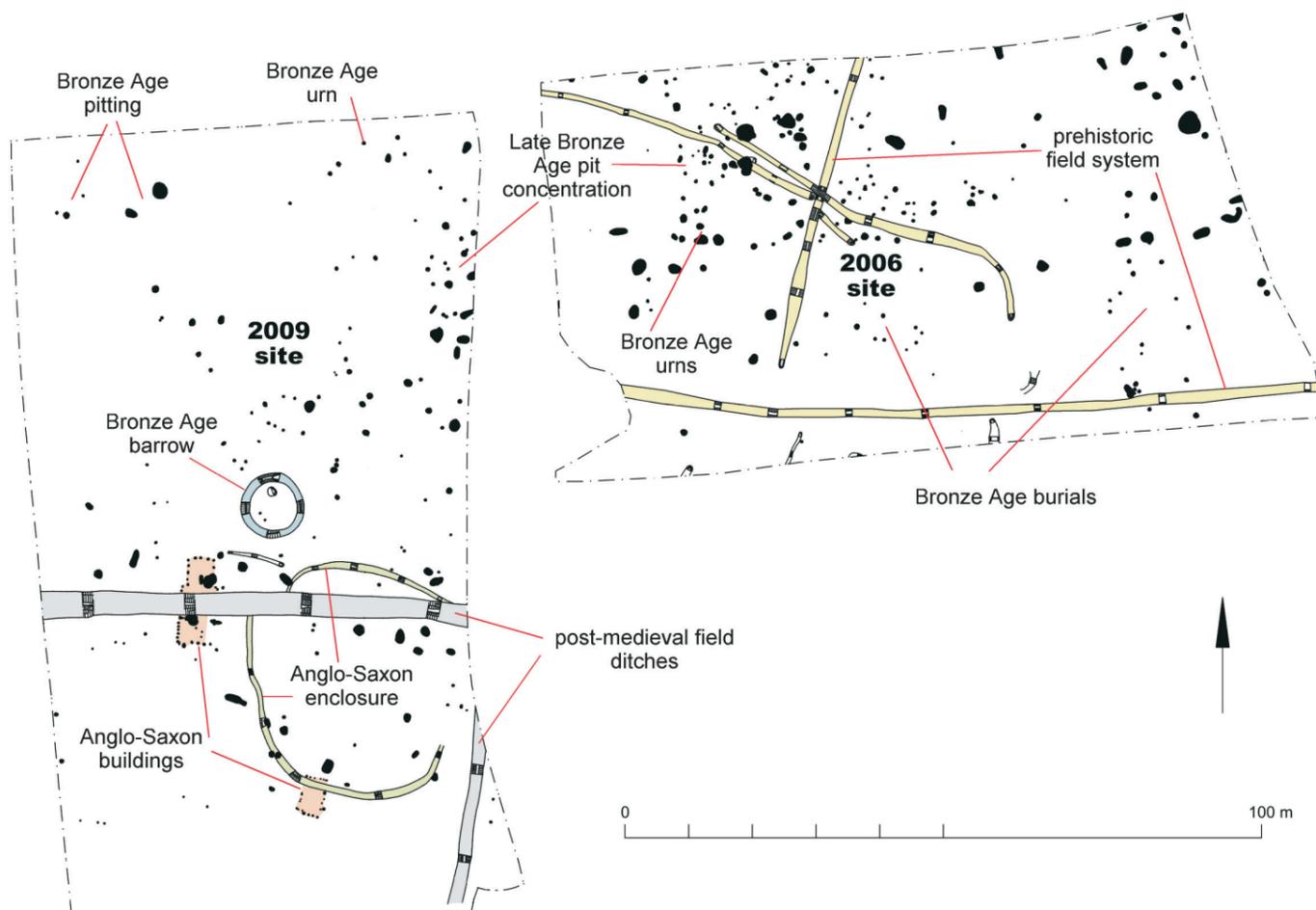
Modern Agriculture

The first features spotted were two large field ditches. To judge by the finds recovered from the ditches (pottery, brick and peg-tile, and substantial amounts of agricultural iron-mongery), these belonged to recently-removed hedgerows which had once subdivided this field.

Bronze Age burial

Of particular interest, especially given the location of the site in an area with a high concentration of prehistoric monuments, was the discovery of a ring-ditch in the centre of the site. Pottery fragments in the ditch fills date it to the Late Bronze Age (LBA : approximately 1,000 BC). When the ditch was first dug out, there was a break on its northern side. This gap was closed off when the ditch was dug out again (still in the LBA). This ring-ditch was similar in dimensions to an enclosure excavated at Great Baddow, to the west of the 2009 site. Given that there is little evidence of internal structures within the ring-ditch, it seems most likely that it is all that remains of a 'barrow' whose mound and burial have been removed by subsequent centuries of ploughing.

Was the barrow alone in its LBA landscape? No. Another significant Bronze Age feature was the bottom half of a pot which had been placed upright in a pit, 60m to the north of the ring-ditch (its upper half was missing, having been removed by ploughing). Pots such as these are normally interpreted as burial urns, but the absence of cremated human bone introduces an element of uncertainty – was it a burial or not?



Consequently, the urn has been interpreted as a 'placed deposit' (there were similar examples on the 2006 excavation site). There may be some underlying ritual significance to the placed deposit which is lost on the modern observer. Did it signify the ownership of land, or was it a cenotaph?

Romans and Anglo-Saxons

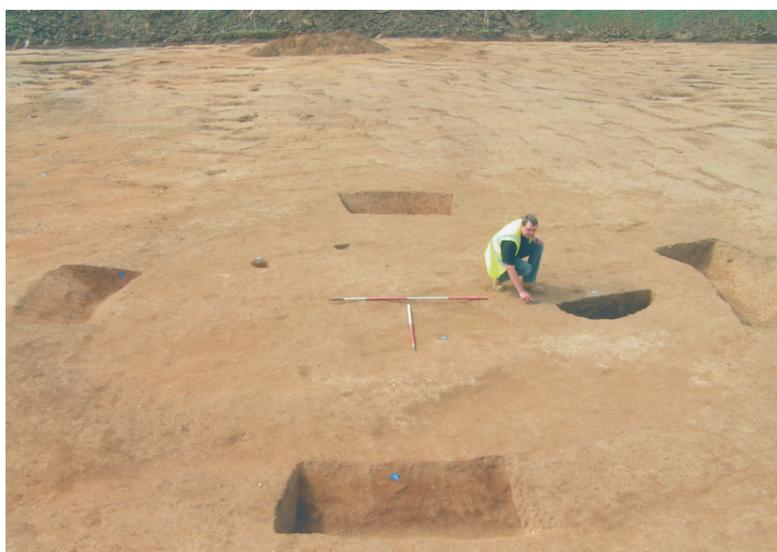
It is perhaps a surprise that very few of the excavated features or loose finds of pottery were of Roman date. It would be surprising if this land had been left barren in the Roman period. A more attractive hypothesis would be that this land

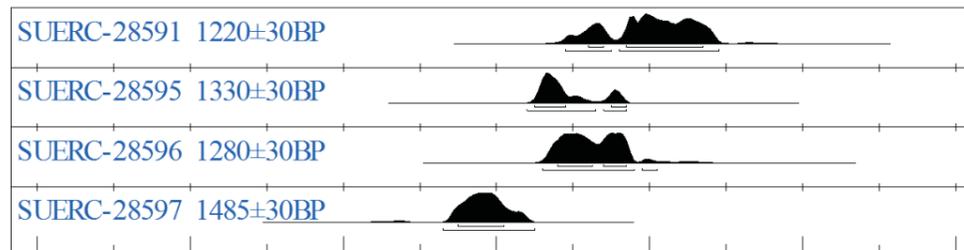
Late Bronze Age ring ditch.

Bronze Age settlement

The large number of post-holes found on the 2006 site initially indicated that the focus of settlement in the LBA lay to the immediate east of the 2009 site. However, it may be the case that the 2009 excavation also uncovered parts of the LBA settlement. The evidence for this is the large number of pits and post-holes in the southern and eastern parts of the 2009 site. Half a dozen of these date to the LBA, but it is quite likely that a substantial number of the undated features were also of Bronze Age date (given the presence of the LBA ring-ditch and placed deposit).

Untangling the large numbers of 2009 post-holes and pits is difficult, but it is possible that the plans of structures such as fence lines and four-post structures (or granaries) may lie hidden among the groups of features. However, none of these can be identified with any degree of certainty.





CalBC/CalAD 200CalAD 400CalAD 600CalAD 800CalAD 1000CalAD 1200CalAD
Calibrated date

was a block of pasture in a Roman farming estate, but was not close to any of the estate buildings.

However, the most interesting aspect of the 2009 season was the discovery of two Anglo-Saxon timber buildings, with an associated enclosure. The more southerly of the two was defined by post-holes showing where the walls originally stood, and measured approximately 3.5m x 6m. It appears to have been put out of use when the ditch of a large enclosure associated with a second timber building was cut through it. The other building was larger, at 3.5m x 13.6m, and may have had a hearth at its northern end. A nearby enclosure measuring approximately 35m x 32m (its east edge was not clearly defined) was presumably for stock, and the inhabitants of the two buildings were Anglo-Saxon farmers.

wall posts had been burnt *in situ*. Samples of these deposits were sent to environmental archaeologist Val Fryer, who was able to collect sufficient quantities of charcoal to allow an attempt at C14 dating. The samples were prepared, and sent to the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre (SUERC) at the University of Glasgow for dating. Now comes the techno-babble, so pay attention as there will be a short quiz at the end!

The above graph shows the results of the radiocarbon dates of samples from four of the Sandon post-holes. The raw data shown in the illustration needs to be interpreted, so that we can read off the 'real' dates. The left side of the graph shows each sample with its laboratory reference number and a date in years BP followed by a '±' notation. BP stands for Before Present, which (by international agreement) is the year AD 1950. So to convert 'Before Present' dates to 'Before Christ' dates in the first sample, subtract 1950 from 1220, the answer being 730 (AD). In fact this date is only the centre point of a range, which is given as 30, or 30 years on either side of AD 730 (ie, AD 700-760). The final scientific bit (honest) is 'CalBC'. This refers to the fact that 'raw' radiocarbon dates are too 'young', and have to be calibrated against tree-ring dates to give a reading in 'real' or calendar years AD. The scale along the bottom of the graph shows calibrated dates (ie dates in 'real' years AD).

As a result, the centre points of the Sandon dates are (reading down the column) AD 870, AD 770, AD 770 and AD 650 (each one with a small error margin of 35 to 50 years). CAT is grateful to Dr Gordon Cook and his team at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre in East Kilbride who carried out the dating work.

This excavation is likely to be our last project at the Sandon Park and Ride site. CAT evaluations and excavations since 2005 have provided a window on the development of this ridge above the river Chelmer from the Bronze Age burials and settlement to Anglo-Saxon occupation, and eventually to modern agriculture.

The larger, more southerly, post-built house which was dated by radiocarbon dating.

C14 dating explained

Some of the post-holes in the south-western corner of the larger building contained charcoal and well-defined 'post pipes' indicating that the



The archaeological excavations were funded by the Essex County Council as part of the works needed to create the carpark.



Flag Fen Archaeology Park

The Friends of Colchester Archaeological Trust

Annual roundup by chairman Jane Meech

The Friends' Annual Lecture, held usually on the last Saturday in January, is an opportunity for members to hear presentations from the Trust staff on the projects they have carried out in the previous year. Always accompanied by excellent slide presentations, it is a rare chance (apart from watching Time Team!) to see excavations and learn about the work of archaeology in all its dirty, cold, wet, muddy - and very occasionally hot - glory. At the Annual Lecture on 30th January 2010 we heard from Adam Wightman, Ben Holloway, Chris Lister, and Don Shimmin, on some of the excavations, observations, and watching briefs that they worked on in 2009. Philip Crummy also gave us an update on the progress of the Sergeants' Mess appeal as at that date.

Our first coach trip of 2009 was to Flag Fen Archaeology Park, near Peterborough. The importance of the fen edge, which lies to the east of Peterborough, was first identified in the early 20th century. Excavations before the development of the city in the 1960s and 1970s revealed more evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age occupation, but it was in 1982 that Francis Pryor made the initial discovery of a huge timber platform. It was identified as late Bronze Age, dating from over 3,500 years ago. Over the next 14 years further excavations revealed details of the platform, and five rows of upright posts, stretching for nearly a mile across the fen, built up between 1350 and 950 BC. This post alignment, or ritual causeway, is believed to consist of 60,000 vertical timbers, and 250,000 other horizontal pieces of wood, all worked and shaped with tools. This causeway spans the marshy fen, meeting a droveway on dry ground at each end.

It had been hoped that Francis Pryor would be able to meet us and give us a guided tour, but pressing agricultural matters (inoculating his

sheep against blue tongue) prevented this. Our own Mike Corbishley nobly stepped into the breach though, and one of the staff from the site visitor centre also gave our members a guided tour. The whole site is very interesting, particularly the re-created Iron Age and Bronze Age round-houses, and the Preservation Hall, where part of the causeway can be viewed. One of the round-houses even illustrated Iron Age living by having an open fire in the middle, a fact which was much appreciated on a somewhat chilly day.

Trip number two, on a gloriously warm and sunny day, was to Norwich. First stop was the Castle Museum. The Norman castle became a



Norwich



Above and below.
Norwich cathedral.

museum in 1894, but is a fascinating and complex historic building in its own right. We started off outside the huge stone keep while Mike described the initial purpose of the building (as a royal palace for William the Conqueror and as a symbol of his power at a time when most buildings were small wooden structures), and then its use as a county gaol from the 14th to the 19th century. We entered the keep via the



undercroft, where some of the original structure of the castle can be seen, and Mike described the building and construction methods. There is a children's area there where building techniques can be experimented with using blocks of various sizes and shapes. I'm not sure if children appreciate it, but we certainly did, and much fun was had. Inside the keep we examined the huge and detailed model of the keep in medieval times, and compared it to how it is now.

As Norfolk's principal museum, the Castle has extensive archaeology collections including a Boudica gallery and extraordinary collections of art, porcelain, glass and silver. Mike guided us round the archaeology section and the Boudica gallery, including a demonstration of how to drive a chariot through woods - extremely useful.

Many of our party lunched in the excellent café there before meeting up again on the green outside the cathedral in the afternoon. Enjoying the warm sunshine, we listened to Mike giving the most illuminating talk on the monastic remains, those still visible and those long disappeared. As always, Mike brought to life how the vast spread of the monastic buildings worked for those who lived there, and helped us gain a visual image of how it would have looked. We then moved into the cloisters of the cathedral, looking at the various architectural features including the stunning medieval roof bosses and decorations. We spent the last part of the afternoon exploring the cathedral on our own before meeting our coach for the journey home.

The autumn lecture, on 31st October, was given by - Mike Corbishley! Mike's work in Merv, in Turkmenistan, has interested me since he first casually mentioned it to me in his typical low-key way, and I persuaded him to share his experiences with the Friends.

The oasis at Merv, in southern Turkmenistan in central Asia, has been continuously occupied since the early 2nd millennium BC. Impressive remains of buildings and fortifications survive from the pre-Islamic Persian and Hellenistic periods, and a number of Islamic cities were later built there along the Silk Routes. At its height, Merv was the second most important site in the Islamic world, after Baghdad. The Turkmen government has created an archaeological park at Ancient Merv, which is a World Heritage Site with its own staff, facilities, and museum.

The Institute of Archaeology at University College London, where Mike works, has been excavating at Merv for a number of years, and has more recently concentrated on mapping this vast site and training Turkmen archaeologists and park staff. Mike joined the Merv team in 2004 specifically to create education resources and training for Turkmen teachers. A teachers' handbook and activity sheets were published in 2005 - the first resources of their kind for Merv to be produced in the Turkmen language.

The conditions of working at Merv, where the temperature can be over 50°C in summer and below - 15°C in winter, are difficult and further



Above. Pictures from Merv.

complicated by the fact that politics is involved with everything in a country where history is what the President says it is! The archaeology team has opened up old excavations and has made careful records of them, and has carried out digital recording of the upstanding buildings. The remains of the mud-brick buildings are under threat because of changes to the water-table level brought about by irrigation canals and channels constructed in Soviet times for cotton growing, and camels are also a problem because they rub up against the buildings. The Institute's team are training local people to carry out for themselves the work of caring for this World Heritage Site in the face of what might euphemistically be termed lack of support from the government. The lecture was illustrated by splendid photos taken by Mike, and the good turnout of Friends enjoyed a fascinating afternoon.

In addition to all his work for the Friends events programme, Mike has found time to produce a guide to the archaeological monuments of Colchester. At our AGM in 2009, a member present at the business meeting in the morning commented that there was no simple, free guide for tourists to these monuments. Mike suggested that the Friends produce a two-page guide to the Roman remains, which could be distributed through the Tourist office, as well as on websites. Mike not only offered to write the guide, but also to find German and Dutch translators for our foreign visitors. Maureen Jones knew someone who would be willing to help translate it into French too. Mike and Philip Crummy have now produced the guide, which will be available through the Friends website (see inside cover) as well as in tourist offices. The translations will be available in July. If this guide proves popular with visitors, consideration will be given to producing others, eg the dykes, and medieval Colchester.

I must once again express my gratitude to Mike, my co-organiser of the trips out, and our guest lecturer in 2009. Mike finds time in a very busy life to research the venues, negotiate favourable entry costs, and produce handouts for everyone in addition to providing informative and amusing talks as he shepherds us round. Without him the trips just would not happen, so many thanks Mike. I would also like to thank Philip's team at the Trust for giving up their time to deliver the Annual Lecture for us.

Lastly, I am pleased to report that in 2009 the Friends were able to make two donations to the Trust - one to fund a geophysical survey of Castle Park, and another towards the production costs of *The Colchester Archaeologist* magazine. We also, in 2010, donated £1,000 towards the Sergeants' Mess appeal. The surplus from the events programme, plus subscriptions and donations, enable us to give these contributions to the Trust's work so the support of members is much appreciated.